

Rene Guillen

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SEP 14 2004

Dear Colonel Knight

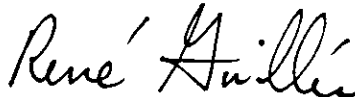
As you well know, hurricane season is well underway and in the past weeks we Floridians have felt its wrath either directly or indirectly through Hurricanes Charlie and/or Frances. As Troopers, we are obligated to handle these threats so to protect the citizens of Florida, and as citizens ourselves, those responsibilities include the protection of our families and our property. These dual roles can sometimes place conflicting situations in our lives and I found myself for the first time, having difficulty handling my FHP obligations together with my family responsibilities during the aftermath of Hurricane Charlie.

Thankfully, Hurricane Charlie did not make landfall in the Miami-Dade area but its powerful force winds devastated the western and central regions of the state. Many Troopers from Troop E were assigned to aid in the impacted areas including cities like Arcadia where my Step Mother (Kathy Walker) and two younger sisters (Lauren and Shelby) live. For days after the Hurricane entered the west coast, I tried to get in contact with my family. Due to the devastation, it wasn't until the third day that their phone service was restored and I was able to speak to my Stepmother. She explained that they had no electricity and that she was running out of supplies, which included food and water. Although food, water and Ice were being distributed throughout the city, the demand was too great and supplies were being depleted at rates faster than could be replenished. In other words, they needed help and they needed it fast. I then called my immediate supervisors and I was placed in contact with Sgt. Alex Annunziato, who was assigned to Port Charlotte, driving distance from my Stepmother's house.

Sgt. Annunziato showed much understanding and compassion after I explained the situation. He immediately sprung into action delegating responsibilities and working interdependently with the other Troopers. In a short time, my Stepmother called me in tears thanking me for all the supplies that we were able to provide. Sgt. Annunziato not only supplied them with the necessary food and water, but also acted in the true spirit of the Florida Highway Patrol, honorably and professionally. By the time my stepmother and sisters had regained power in their home, Sgt. Annunziato had made two trips to their house, keeping them in full supply and me completely informed and able to concentrate on my duties both at home and at work.

This situation made me very proud to work for the Florida Highway Patrol, and thanks to Sgt. Annunziato, the FHP's commitment to serve is appreciated and embraced by my family as well. As we keep watchful eye into the far reaches of the Atlantic Ocean this very active hurricane season, I can rest assured knowing that the Florida Highway Patrol will back me up if the storms hit and their shattering affects trigger our professional obligations and interrupt our personal lives.

Most sincerely,



Rene Guillen,
State Trooper/Florida Citizen
Troop E - Miami